

THE WINSTON SCHOOL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On Monday, a small independent school in Del Mar serving students with learning disabilities hosted Bill Gates, Sandra Day O'Connor, Cesare Chavez and Stephen Spielberg.

Pocohantas, Albert Einstein, Oprah Winfrey and George Washington were also sighted.

December 4th at The Winston School, 7th and 8th graders brought history to life in the school's annual "BioFaire." Over the course of their first semester, each student selected an important figure from history and researched him or her in depth, writing a paper and creating both a poster board display and art project based on the person they studied.

On Monday, each student donned an appropriate costume and adopted the persona of their subject. For an hour, they answered questions about their historical figure from high school students, parents, teachers--even the headmaster. Milton Hershey (7th grader Robbie Hopson) greeted every one of his questioners with a Hershey's Kiss. In response to a question about his most important accomplishment, the 7th grade chocolate mogul stated without hesitation, "Making chocolate accessible to the poor. Before me it was a rich man's delicacy. After me, everyone could enjoy chocolate."

In the afternoon, they were introduced to the entire student body and several of them spoke at some length. George W. Bush (Sean Crofton) stole the show with a drawling summary of his resume, but brought a hush when he said, "On September 11, 2001, my presidency changed."

According to headmaster Mike Peterson, this event is a highlight of the year. "The students do a great job in the spotlight of the BioFaire, but it's important to remember it required 10 weeks of work to prepare for this one hour. Research, writing, preparation of the bibliography, identification of central ideas for their oral presentation are all part of the process. Their History Teacher, Mrs. Castile, does a wonderful job of leading them through this sophisticated project."

In an era when standardized tests have become the primary mode of student assessment in many schools, Winston's BioFaire goes against the grain. "Learning-different students need a chance to show what they understand about a subject in ways that tap their innate creativity and capitalize on their unique learning styles," Peterson said. When offered enough pathways, they can succeed as well as any student."

For more information see the school's website, www.thewinstonschool.com or the Friends of Del Mar Parks' website at www.delmarparks.org, or contact Winston Headmaster Mike Peterson at 858-259-8155.

****End****